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I R:

Transmitted herewith for filing is: ☒ a new application
[] a c-i-p application of S.N. _____ filed _____

Inventor(s): Kazuyoshi UENO

For: SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE AND A METHOD FOR FORMING A VIA HOLE IN A
SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE

Enclosed are:

- ☒ 2 sheets of drawings.(Figs. 1(a)-1(c),2(a)-2(c))
☒ Specification, including claims and abstract (12 pages)
☒ Declaration
☒ An assignment of the Invention to NEC CORPORATION
☒ A certified copy of Japanese Application No. 11-016258
☒ An associate power of attorney
☐ A verified statement to establish small entity status under 37 CFR 1.9 and 37 CFR 1.27
☒ Post card
☒ Recording fee (as indicated below)
☒ Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449, copies of 2 references
☐ Other _____
☐ Other _____

	Col. 1	Col. 2
FOR:	NO. FILED	NO. EXTRA
BASIC FEE		
TOTAL CLAIMS	11-20 =	0
INDEP CLAIMS	2-3 =	0
[] MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS PRESENTED		

*If the difference in Col. 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in Col. 2

SMALL ENTITY	
RATE	FEE
	\$345
x 9 =	\$
x 39 =	\$
x 130 =	\$
TOTAL	\$

OTHER THAN A SMALL ENTITY	
RATE	FEE
	\$690
x 18 =	\$
x 78 =	\$
x 260 =	\$
TOTAL	\$690

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60th Floor
Empire State Building
New York, New York 10118-6098
(212)643-5000

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Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

- ☒ Aaron B. Karas, Reg. No. 18,923
☐ Samson Helfgott, Reg. No. 23,072
☐ Leonard Cooper, Reg. No. 27, 625
☐ Linda S. Chan, Reg. No. 42,400
☐ Jacqueline M. Steady, Reg. No. 44,354
☐ Harris A. Wolin, Reg. No. 39,432

SPECIFICATION

Semiconductor Device and a Method for Forming a Via Hole in a Semiconductor Device

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a semiconductor device and a method for forming a via hole in a semiconductor device, and more particularly to a semiconductor device and a method for forming a via hole, whereby a via hole is formed so as to extend to a copper interconnect layer without being adversely affected by the copper.

2. Background of the Invention

The achievement of high levels of integration and smaller feature sizes in semiconductor devices creates a demand for reduction in the diameter of via holes that are used to make connections among a plurality of interconnect layers to have a very small diameter.

That this reduction in diameter leads to an increase in electrical resistance, has been reported in the literature (S. Lakashminarayanan et al, Proc. 1994 VMIC (1994), p. 49).

Additionally, it is known that a via leakage current flows among a plurality of via holes.

It is obvious that this via leakage current occurs because, when a via hole is formed, the copper of a copper interconnect layer that is exposed becomes reattached to the via hole surface when sputtering is done using argon, and it can be easily inferred that, if the copper is diffused, there is a further increase in the leakage current.

This problem with the prior art method is illustrated in more detail in Fig. 2 (a), Fig. 2(b), and Fig. 2(c). As shown in Fig. 2 (a), a resist layer/SiO₂ layer/Cu interconnect layer are formed at a first step, and a via hole extending to the copper interconnect layer is formed at the second step.

As shown in Fig. 2 (b), resist is removed at a third step.

At this step, copper on the surface of the copper interconnect layer acts on the via hole side surface so as to form a copper deposition on the side surface, this side surface copper deposition being a cause of leakage current.

In addition, there is oxidation of the copper surface of the copper interconnect layer, this oxidation leading to an increase in electrical resistance.

The barrier performance of the TaN barrier film formed as shown in Fig. 2 (c) is weak in the barrier characteristic.

When making connection between a plurality of interconnects by filling contact holes formed so as to extend to a copper interconnect layer with copper, a method of avoiding an insufficient Cu-Cu electrical connection is known from the disclosure in the Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication (KOKAI) No. 10-261715.

Even if the Cu-Cu connection is good, there is no solution for the above-noted problem of re-attachment of copper.

In a proposed method to solve this type of problem than can be considered, a substrate having a $\text{SiO}_2/\text{SiN}/\text{Cu}$ three-layer structure is formed, a first step via hole being formed so that its formation is stopped at the middle layer of SiN, after which a second step via hole is formed to shorten the overetching time, thereby avoiding the adverse effect of the copper.

In this proposal, there is a step of forming via holes that are similar in appearance, this being shown in Fig. 5 (c) of the above-noted Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication (KOKAI) No.10-261715.

The above-noted known method of forming a via hole, does not provide neither sufficient suppression of the oxidation of the copper surface, nor sufficient solution for the problem of re-attachment of copper that occurs when cleaning is done when argon plasma after formation of the via hole.

Additionally, when depositing a barrier film by sputtering, in the method of the past, the above-noted problems occur, making it difficult to avoid the

adverse effect of the copper.

By avoiding a lengthening of the overetching time of the via hole (particularly Dual Damascene), by avoiding oxidation contamination of the copper surface during peeling using oxygen plasma or the like, and by avoiding the diffusion and re-attachment of copper to side surfaces of the via hole when sputtering is done using argon or the like, it is possible to eliminate an increase in electrical resistance while suppressing the occurrence of leakage current.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a method for forming a via hole in a semiconductor device, whereby by avoiding a lengthening of the overetching time of the via hole it is possible to not only eliminate an increase in electrical resistance, but also suppress the occurrence of leakage current.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device whereby by avoiding a lengthening of the overetching time of the via hole and also by avoiding oxidation contamination of the exposed copper surface, an increase in electrical resistance is effectively suppressed, as is the occurrence of leakage current.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a method for forming a via hole in a semiconductor device, whereby by avoiding a lengthening of the overetching time of the via hole, by avoiding oxidation contamination of the exposed copper surface, and by avoiding the influence of copper when performing sputtering, it is possible to more effectively suppress an increase in electrical resistance and to more effectively suppress the occurrence of leakage current.

Further object of the present invention is to provide a semiconductor device which has at least one via hole filled with an electrical conductive material so as to eliminate an increase in electrical resistance as well as to suppress the occurrence of leakage current.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In order to achieve the above-noted objects, the present invention has the following basic technical constitution. In the description of that constitution which follows, numbers in parentheses minimally indicate a number of a plurality of claims of the accompanying claims that correspond with various technical aspects of the present invention, although it will be understood that these numbers are provided to indicate this correspondence, and do not restrict the scope of the claimed invention to the embodiments.

A first aspect of the present invention is a semiconductor device which comprises, a substrate, on a main surface of which, interconnect layers made at least of copper are formed along with a predetermined pattern in buried condition, an etching-stop layer formed on the main surface of the substrate, and an insulation layer formed on the etching-stop layer, and wherein the semiconductor device further comprises a via-hole provided on a main surface of the insulation layer and penetrating through the insulation layer and the etching-stop layer so that a bottom of the via-hole reaches at a surface of the interconnect layer, and wherein a barrier layer continuously covering the main surface of the insulation layer, inside wall surface of the via-hole and surface of the interconnect layer integrately.

On the other hand, a second aspect of the present invention is a method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device comprising, a step of forming a first step via hole in a laminated structure formed by a copper layer, an etching-stop layer formed on a surface of the copper layer, and an insulation layer formed on a surface of the etching-stop layer, thereby a bottom of the first step via hole is stopped at the etching-stop layer, a step of forming a second step via hole continuous with the first step via hole in the etching-stop layer, thereby a bottom of the second step via hole reaching at a surface of the interconnect layer, a step of cleaning the second step via hole, and a step, after the cleaning, of forming a barrier film on the first and second step

via holes, by sputtering.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1(a), Fig. 1(b), and Fig. 1(c) are cross-section views showing the steps of an embodiment of a method of forming a via hole according to the present invention.

Fig. 2 (a), Fig. 2(b), and Fig. 2(c) are cross-section views showing the steps of a prior art method.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of a semiconductor device and a method for forming a via hole in a semiconductor device according to the present invention will be explained in detail below, with references being made to relevant accompanying drawings.

In Fig. 1 (c) shows a specific embodiment of the semiconductor device 30 according to the present invention and in that a semiconductor device 30 which comprises, a substrate 10, on a main surface of which, interconnect layers 1 made at least of copper are formed along with a predetermined pattern in buried condition, an etching-stop layer 2 formed on the main surface of the substrate 10, and an insulation layer 3 formed on the etching-stop layer 2, and wherein the semiconductor device 30 further comprises a via-hole 20 provided on a main surface of the insulation layer 3 and penetrating through the insulation layer 3 and the etching-stop layer 2 so that a bottom 21 of the via-hole 20 reaches at a surface of the interconnect layer 1, and wherein a barrier layer 7 continuously covering the main surface of the insulation layer 3, inside wall surface 5 of the via-hole 20 and surface of the interconnect layer, integrately, is shown.

Since the semiconductor device 30 of the present invention has such a configuration as mentioned above, it can have features in that it has a low via hole resistance and improved reliability as well as anti-leakage current would be caused between via holes.

On the other hand, one embodiment of a method for forming a via hole in a semiconductor device having such a configuration as mentioned above, in the present invention will be explained hereunder with reference to attached Figs. 1(a) to 1(c).

The basic method for producing the via hole 20 in a semiconductor device 30 of the present invention, comprising, a step of forming a first step via hole (5) in a laminated structure formed by a copper layer (1), an etching-stop layer (2) on the surface side of the copper layer (1), and an insulation layer (3) on the surface side of the etching-stop layer (2), a step whereby the formation of the first step via hole (5) is stopped by the etching-stop layer (2), and a second step via hole (6) is further formed so as to continue from the first step via hole (5), thereby forming a via hole, a step whereby the second step via hole (6) extends to the copper layer (1) and the second step via hole (6) is cleaned, and a step, after the above-noted cleaning, whereby a barrier film (7) is formed on the first step via hole (5) and the second step via hole (6) by sputtering.

The formation of this two-stepped via hole, affects the above-mentioned cleaning step and the above-mentioned sputtering step and due to such shortened overetching time, it is possible to minimize the influence of the copper on the steps of cleaning and sputtering.

Further, because the sputtering is done after cleaning, it is possible to minimum the current leakage.

On the other hand, it is possible to effectively suppress an increase in the electrical resistance of a Cu-Cu connection made in this manner by filling a via hole with copper after sputtering.

In the present invention, it is preferable that the resist layer (4) be peeled away after forming the first step via hole (5) but before forming the second via hole (6).

It is particularly preferable that the step for cleaning the via hole (5,

6) be performed at a low oxygen partial pressure. It is additionally preferable that the step for cleaning the via hole has a step for treating the via hole with an oxygen plasma before a step for annealing same at a low oxygen partial pressure.

It is preferable that the step for cleaning the via hole further has a step for wet processing of the via hole after a step for treating the via hole with an oxygen plasma.

It is further preferable that the step for annealing same at a low oxygen partial pressure be performed in a chamber for sputtering.

It is desirable that the step for annealing at a low oxygen partial pressure be performed just before such sputtering process will be performed.

It is extremely effective to leave the semiconductor substrate to be treated in the step for annealing at a low oxygen partial pressure, in a sputtering chamber at a temperature of 250 °C or higher for 3 minutes or longer before forming the barrier film.

The low oxygen partial pressure is 1 Torr or lower.

It is particularly effective for the formation of the two-step via hole if the step for annealing at a low oxygen partial pressure is performed in a hydrogen atmosphere, and particularly in an atmosphere in which hydrogen radicals are supplied.

A more specific embodiment of the semiconductor device and a method for producing a via hole in the semiconductor device will be further explained hereunder.

As shown in Fig. 1 (a), a substrate 10 is prepared as a 3-layer structure. This 3-layer substrate is formed by a copper interconnect layer 1 on a main surface of and in the substrate 10, a SiN layer 2 formed over on the upper surface of the copper interconnect layer 1, and a SiO₂ layer 3 formed on the upper surface of the SiN layer 2.

A resist layer 4 is formed and then patterned, so as to form a first step

The partial pressure of oxygen in the chamber is 1 Torr or lower, and it is possible to either draw a vacuum in the chamber or introduce an argon atmosphere therein. As shown in Fig. 1 (c), this sputtering forms a barrier

film 7 on the via holes 5 and 6.

It is preferable that the above-noted low oxygen partial pressure annealing be performed in a hydrogen atmosphere.

Annealing in a hydrogen atmosphere is advantageous because it has the effect of removing an oxide film and enables quick processing at a low temperature.

It is further preferable that this low oxygen partial pressure annealing be performed while supplying hydrogen radicals.

Annealing in a hydrogen atmosphere while supplying hydrogen radicals is advantageous because it provides even better removal of an oxide film and enables quicker and lower-temperature processing.

A method for forming a via hole according to the present invention makes use of a two-step etching process, thereby preventing oxidation of the copper surface during the peeling process, preventing a deterioration of the copper surface at the bottom surface of the via hole, which results in a decrease in via hole resistance and improved reliability.

An additional effect is a shortening of the overetching time at the second etching step, and a reduced amount of plasma damage to the copper surface. Yet another effect is the ability to prevent leakage between via holes.

Another effect of the present invention is that, by performing annealing at a low oxygen partial pressure, it is possible to effectively remove an oxide layer from the copper surface. Another advantage of the present invention is the simplicity of the step at which low oxygen partial pressure annealing is performed immediately before deposition in a high-temperature sputtering chamber.

Additionally, by not using an organic gas when cleaning, there is little attachment of carbon and the like, enabling removal of a clean copper oxide film, and by not using a plasma, there is no re-attachment of copper.

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What is claimed is:

1. A semiconductor device which comprises;

a substrate, on a main surface of which, interconnect layers made at least of copper are formed along with a predetermined pattern in buried condition;

an etching-stop layer formed on said main surface of said substrate; and

an insulation layer formed on said etching-stop layer,

said semiconductor device further comprises a via-hole provided on a main surfacer of said insulation layer and penetrating through said insulation layer and said etching-stop layer so that a bottom of said via-hole reaches at a surface of said interconnect layer, and wherein a barrier layer continuously covering said main surface of said insulation layer, inside wall surface of said via-hole and surface of said interconnect layer integrately.

2. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device comprising:

a step of forming a first step via hole in a laminated structure formed by a copper layer, an etching-stop layer formed on a surface of said copper layer, and an insulation layer formed on a surface of said etching-stop layer, thereby a bottom of said first step via hole is stopped at said etching-stop layer;

a step of forming a second step via hole continuous with said first step via hole in said etching-stop layer, thereby a bottom of said second step via hole reaching at a surface of said interconnect layer;

a step of cleaning said second step via hole; and

a step, after said cleaning, of forming a barrier film on said first and second step via holes, by sputtering.

3. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim2, wherein said step of cleaning said via hole comprises a step for annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure.

4. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 3, wherein said step of cleaning said via hole further comprises a step for treating said via hole with an oxygen plasma, before said step of annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure.
5. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 4, wherein said step of cleaning said via hole further comprises a step for performing wet processing of the via hole after treating said via hole with an oxygen plasma.
6. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 3, wherein said step of annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure is further performed in a sputtering chamber for said sputtering.
7. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 6, wherein said step for annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure is further performed immediately before said sputtering.
8. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 7, wherein said semiconductor substrate in the step for annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure is held in said sputtering chamber at a temperature of 250 °C or greater for at least three minutes before said step of forming a barrier film.
9. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 8, wherein the oxygen partial pressure when said sputtering is performed is 1 Torr or lower.
10. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 8, wherein said step of annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure is performed in a hydrogen atmosphere.
11. A method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device according to claim 10, wherein said step of annealing said via hole at a low oxygen partial pressure is performed in an atmosphere in which hydrogen radicals are supplied.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In a method for forming a via hole of a semiconductor device, a first step via hole is formed in a SiO₂ layer/etching-stop layer/Cu layer laminate, this formation being stopped at the etching-stop layer, after which resist is peeled away, and a second step via hole continuous with the first step via hole is formed in the etching-stop layer. These via holes are patterned and a barrier film is formed thereonto using sputtering. By shortening the overetching time an increase in the electrical resistance of the Cu-Cu connection is suppressed, and current leakage is prevented.

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Fig. 1(a)

4: RESIST LAYER

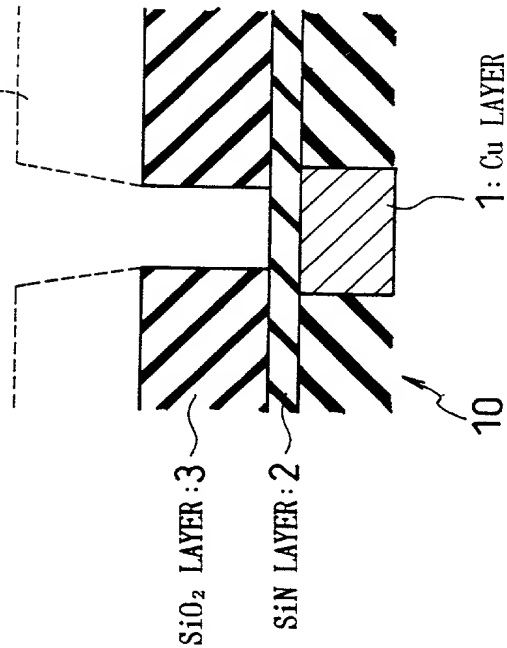


Fig. 1(b)

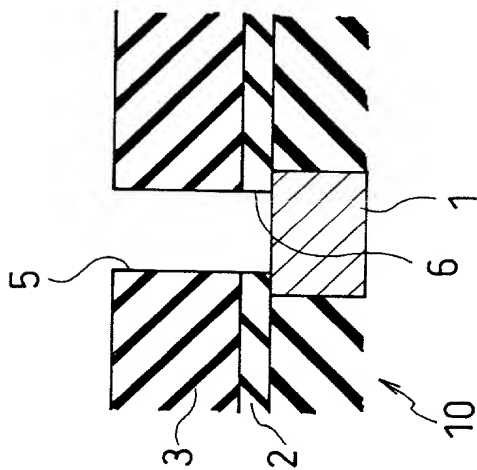
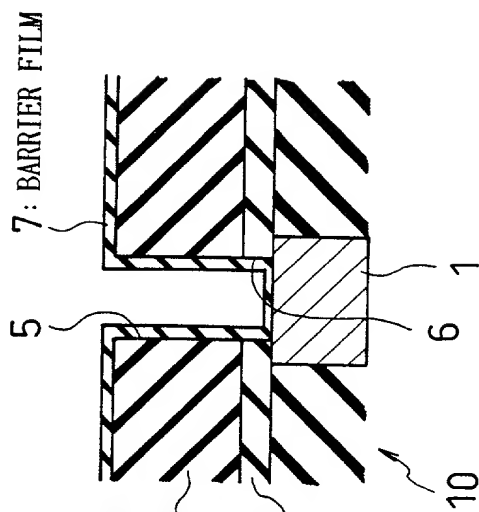


Fig. 1(c)



1/2

Fig. 2(a)

PRIOR ART

11: RESIST LAYER

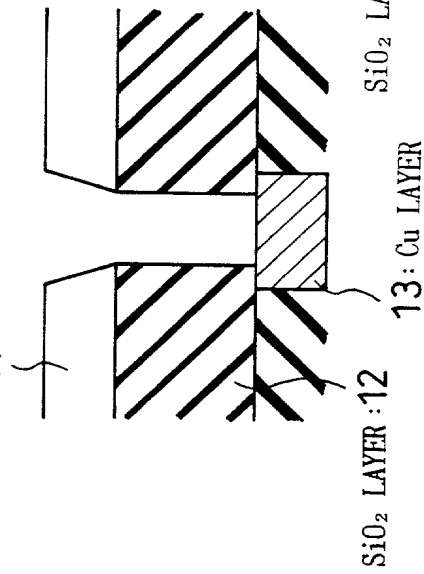
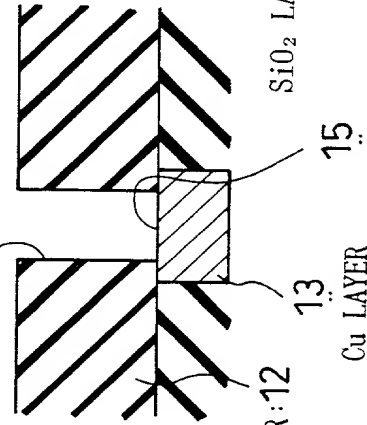


Fig. 2(b)

PRIOR ART

14: SIDE WALL Cu DEPOSITS

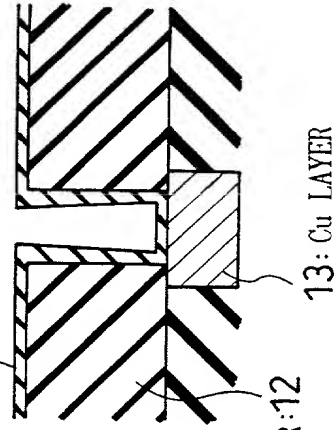


Cu SURFACE OXIDATION

Fig. 2(c)

PRIOR ART

16: BARRIER FILM (TaN)



DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE AND A METHOD FOR
FORMING A VIA HOLE IN A SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE

the specification of which

(check one) ☒ is attached hereto
☐ was filed on _____ as
Application Serial No. _____
and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by an amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations { 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, { 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s)			Priority Claimed
<u>16258/1999</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>25 January, 1999</u>	<u>Yes</u> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
_____	_____	_____	Yes No
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
_____	_____	_____	Yes No
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code { 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, { 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations { 1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status-patented, pending, abandoned)
_____	_____	_____
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status-patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby appoint as my attorney and agent Aaron B. Karas, Reg. No. 18,923, Samson Helfgott, Reg. No. 23,072, Leonard Cooper, Reg. No. 27,625, and Russell Gross, Reg. No. 40,007 to prosecute this application and to transmit all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

Address all correspondence to:

HELFGOTT & KARAS, P.C.
Empire State Building, 60th Floor
New York, New York 10118-0110
Telephone No.: (212) 643-5000

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole or first inventor Kazuyoshi UENO
Inventor's Signature Kazuyoshi Ueno Date December 1, 1999
Residence Tokyo, Japan Citizenship Japan
Post Office Address c/o NEC Corporation
7-1, Shiba 5-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Full name of second joint inventor, if any _____
Second Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____
Residence _____ Citizenship _____
Post Office Address _____

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